

OGC 75-4582
10 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Privacy Act Systems Managers

SUBJECT : Supplement to Definition of Records to be Considered as
Pertaining to Individuals Under Privacy Act Requests,
dated 7 November 1975, OGC 75-3838

1. Indices Search Results or Indices Trace Results

These computer printouts have routinely been treated as records under the Privacy Act.

It is recommended that this practice be discontinued. Search or trace results are merely an automated index of records pertaining to an individual. They do not constitute a record in themselves however useful they may be in locating the actual documents. Referencing an indices search in correspondence with requesters results in confusion and stimulates unnecessary correspondence.


This is especially true when a trace is made in response to a Privacy Act request and the trace turns up no record. By referencing the trace result in the response to the requester we are inferring that a record exists when in fact there is no record. This has caused confusion among the unsophisticated requesters.

2. Routing Slips

Unless a routing slip contains, on its face, substantive information about the person making the Privacy Act request, such routing slips should not be considered as records pertaining to the individual and should not be referenced in responses to requests.

3. Index Cards

Index cards should not be considered records under the Privacy Act.


Assistant General Counsel

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OGC Has Reviewed

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